**Important Points about Teleservice**

1. The official CNCS policies concerning teleservice supersede those of your site. They are detailed in the form titled “CNCS Policy on Teleservice,” which may also be found in the VISTA Handbook, Ch. 13, Sec. 2, Para. 1.
2. You may not teleserve without prior approval from your site, VISTA Program Manager, and CNCS. If you teleserve without prior approval, time will be deducted from your vacation leave.
3. If approved, you may teleserve from your official place of residence only (e.g. not coffee stores, not your parents’ house while you’re on vacation, etc.).
   1. You must have the appropriate equipment to serve effectively from home.
   2. Your home must meet all the guidelines established by the AmeriCorps Teleservice Request Form.
4. Teleservice can occur only episodically and due to specific circumstances; it may not be part of your regular schedule. For example, you could not teleserve once a week every week because you did not want to commute to your site or for any other such reason. Conversely, you could potentially teleserve for part of two days in a row if, say, a conference was closer to your home than it was to your site and teleserving allowed you to serve more effectively by avoiding travel time.
5. Each instance of teleservice must be approved by your site supervisor and approval is at his/her discretion.
6. Teleservice may not exceed two days per 14 day pay period.
7. You are eligible to submit a request for teleservice three months after your start date.
8. Teleservice arrangements are expected to be for the benefit of your community and are regarded as a privilege, not a right.

**CNCS POLICY ON TELESERVICE**

A fundamental assumption of the AmeriCorps VISTA service is that members serve in a low-income community at the sponsor’s location and project site. Under limited circumstances, the Corporation State Office may approve VISTA members to perform service at a project under a teleservice agreement where they can perform project-related duties from home. VISTA members may request to perform project-related tasks from home. Members who request to serve under a teleservice arrangement under the auspices of a reasonable accommodation request are excluded from this policy, as those requests are covered under other laws and policies.

Requests for episodic teleservice, not to exceed two days per pay period (a pay period is 14 continuous days), may be considered after a member has been serving satisfactorily at the project site at least three months. Both the supervisor and the Corporation State Office must agree that the following VISTA service requisites are fully satisfied:

1. The member knows the organization and the people within it well enough to effectively build capacity within the organization
2. The member lives and serves the people in the community, and knows the community and people sufficiently to serve them well;
3. The member has proven to the sponsor/supervisor to be a reliable team member (punctual, motivated, professional, thorough, etc.)
4. The member understands that VISTA service is not a 9-5 assignment; that it demands flexibility and availability in one’s schedule
5. The supervisor acts as coach and mentor and goes beyond the responsibilities of a supervisor to an employee

In addition to the prerequisites above, the member’s VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) must lend itself to teleservice in that the tasks can be completed from home. Under no circumstances can teleservice be approved as a regular part of a member’s assignment schedule.

To apply for an episodic teleservice arrangement, a member must (1) request a Teleservice Checklist form from the State Office; (2) complete the form and obtain the VISTA supervisor’s approval and signature; and (3) submit the form to the State Office. The State Office must also approve the requested teleservice. A member cannot engage in teleservice unless the member gets the written approval of both the VISTA supervisor and the Corporation State Office. If the State office approves teleservice, the Teleservice Checklist must be maintained in the VISTA member‘s service file and in the project file at the Corporation State Office. At the discretion of the Corporation State Office, a teleservice arrangement for a member can be revoked at any time, without prior notice.

**To apply for an episodic teleservice arrangement, a member must:**

1. Complete the Teleservice Checklist form and draft a paragraph that details the conditions under which you will teleserve, the tasks you will undertake while teleserving, and how often the you will teleserve. You then must obtain the site supervisor and VISTA supervisor’s approval and signature.
2. Submit the form and paragraph to the ORCC VISTA Program Manager (please CC your VISTA Leader). We will in turn submit it to the CNCS state office. Forms will not be submitted to the state office until three months after the start of the member’s service. The state office must also approve the requested teleservice. A member cannot engage in teleservice unless the member gets the written approval of both the VISTA supervisor and the CNCS state office. If the state office approves teleservice, the member is subject to the conditions detailed in the paragraph they submitted that outlines their teleservice and in “CNCS Policy on Teleservice,” which may also be found in the VISTA Handbook, Ch. 13, Sec. 2, Para. 1.

**An example of a successful teleservice paragraph:**

I am requesting teleservice so that I can perform some of my duties from a distance when scheduling difficulties would make it more convenient and productive to work from home.  With site visits coming up, my schedule will be a little off-kilter. With some sites being located closer to my residence than to my own site it would be more convenient and productive for me to work from home until departing, rather than coming into the office and leaving from there just 30 minutes after arriving. Having provisions in place for teleservice will also permit me to operate in a similar fashion when, for example, scheduling doctor’s appointments either later or earlier in the day, or when traveling for other purposes. While performing teleservice I will undertake the same activities that I currently do: supporting my VISTAs by addressing questions, tracking progress, conducting outreach, and so on, all of which is easily conducted via the internet. All the members of my team have my cell phone number and they can reach me by phone if needed. I do not anticipate requesting teleservice on a regularly scheduled basis, but rather at need, depending on the circumstances.

**An example of an unsuccessful teleservice paragraph:**

With my supervisor’s permission, I am requesting teleservice whenever necessary to complete research projects that don’t require my presence in the office, or when I’m out of town. I understand that teleservice cannot be for more than 16 hours per pay period.

**Things to include in a successful** **teleservice paragraph:**

* What tasks you will undertake while teleserving.
* How often/under what precipitating circumstances you will teleserve.
* In general, how long you plan on teleserving each time you teleserve (ex: a couple hours, a whole day, etc.).
* How you will remain in contact with your site, supervisor, and community while teleserving.
* That you will seek approval from your site supervisor each time before teleserving.